



Bubbles

Hewitt



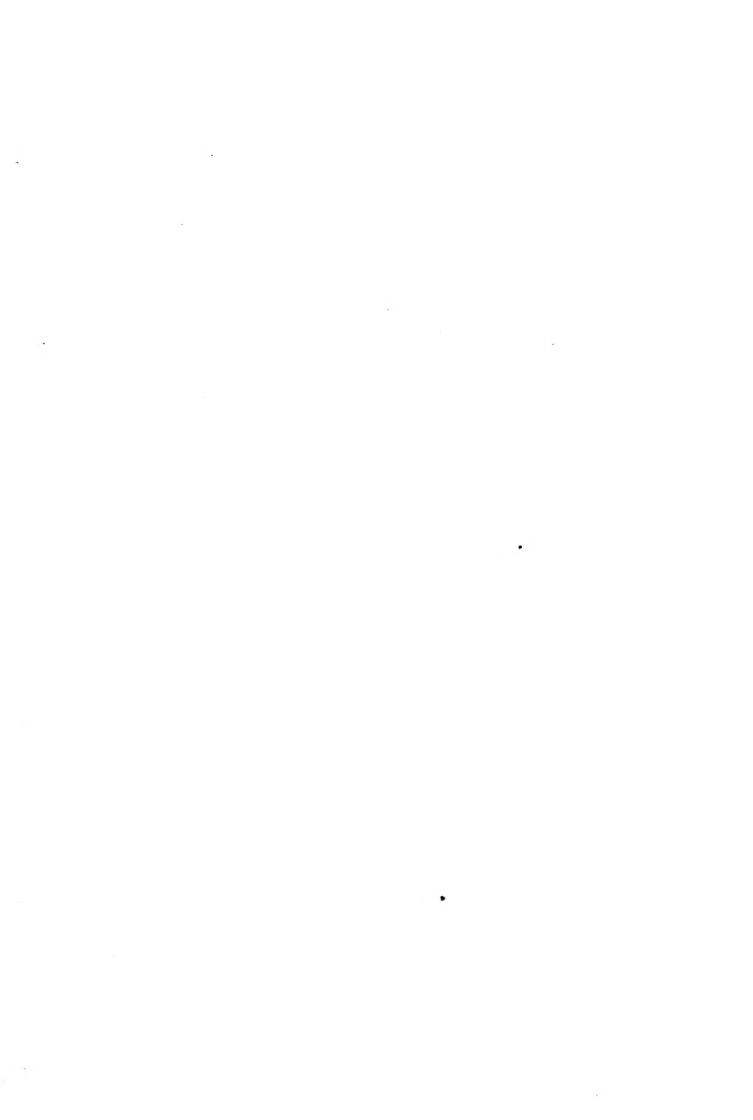


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Bubbles

Bubbles

BY

ARTHUR WENTWORTH HEWITT

Author of "Harp of the North"



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TO
THE REVEREND LEON MORSE
Pastor of St. John's Methodist Episcopal Church
DOVER, NEW HAMPSHIRE

POEMS

INFERNO	9
PARADISE AND THE FINANCIAL AGENT	44
HOMER'S SPILLIAD	49
AN AUTOMOBUBBLESOME TROUBLESOME SONG	56
UNHOLY SCRIPTURES	59
BLINK OF THE MOON	65
LINES OMITTED FROM BUCHAN'S ANCIENT BALLADS	69
BRIDGET O'BRIEN	73
DUNCAN BLISS	76
LONGING	77
THE FAILURE	78
POLLY FOSS	79
SONG OF PUMPKIN BLOSSOM HILL .	80
IN HUSKING TIME	82
WITCHERY OF THE WEIRD	84
OLD TATE	86
MAIDEN VOYAGE TO THE ISLES OF SHOALS	87
RHYMING THE BOOMING BRINE . .	88
GLIS	91
THE INQUEST	94
EPISCOPAL APOSTROPHE	95
FRAE ANE TO T'ITHER	98
EPISTLE TO J. HOWARD FLOWER . .	101
EPISTLE TO MRS. NELLIE E. MORSE .	106
CURSORY REMARKS OF AN AMATEUR THEOLOGIAN	112
EPISTLE TO LEON	121



Bubbles



INFERNO.

In the midway of this my mortal life
I lost myself (Don't mention to my wife)
At evening in a solemn vistaed wood.
Majestic in the somber solitude
Rose, crowned with laurel, stern and sad and
bitter,

An ancient poet. Whooping at the critter,
I asked his name. "My name," he said,
"is Dante.

Six hundred years ago, in every shanty
Of Hell, I made some pastoral calls with
Virgil,

My old presiding elder. Though to urge ill
Becomes it me, you have a chance to learn, oh
Lots and lots and lots about Inferno,
The big nice parish where the ninnies burn so."
"Now that," I chuckled, "beats the moving
pictures!

Bubbles

I'm much obliged! I'll get my hat! Your
strictures

Upon those hoboes, fierce old Ghibelline,
Are great! Let hunger make my rib a lean
Dry bone ere I this circus miss! So sweet it
Will seem to see it all. Now Dante, beat it!"

Forthwith the eminent comedian
Began the hike. He knew how greedy an
Explorer he conducted; sooth to tell
No visit ever I had made to Hell
Though often I, with seeming earnestness,
Had been advised to go. Solicitous
Acquaintances will sometimes hiss at us
A hint to drop in at that furnaced nest,
And so I did, with Dante chaperon.
(Who paid for such a whippersnapper on
The road his fare? I answer, 'tis a vile age
And copiously had I provided mileage.)

And yet 'twas not a mile. Imagination
(As often) was the road to Hell's dominions
Whereof this epic is a true narration

Bubbles

And not a matter of a man's opinions.
I jot in journals what I see arise—
Not theologically theorize.
I should appear a lop-eared ass if I
These reprobates should try to classify.

We shot across the glooms of the abyss,
I bumped against the moon. "What world
is this?

Did devils play the planet a dirty caper
Or did it find a German 'scrap of paper?'
It is so ragged, dead, and black and bleak."
I sat upon a jagged crater's peak
To rest; but Dante yelled, "O Moonstruck
man!

Get up and go to Hell fast as you can!
Or we cannot get in! A wealthy clan
(Myopic, though it wreck the hope of
nations),
The Senate asks *for all the reservations!*"
(November nineteen-hundred-and-nineteen
The journal reads—this tells you what I
mean.)

Bubbles

So, hasting, lest a prior hold on Hell
Exclude us, whizzing streakily pell mell
Like zigzag lightning past the universe,
We shot so fast a bullet is a hearse,
And found an inky door where doth appear:
"All soap abandon, ye who enter here!"

While Dante chose the key that would unlock
it,
I pulled my Baedeker out of my pocket
To study this malodorous first victim
And why Old Nick with such bad taste had
picked him.

But he was not recorded. "Here the tourist,"
Said Dante, "sees a nincompoop the poorest"
(He wiped his megaphone) "of all our list-ins.
When Harp of the North was new he made his
jaw go
(The kind which Samson used to kill Phil-
istines)

As critic in a city called Chicago."
At first I thought, "Oh what a mess I'm in!"
Then bent to see the sorry specimen.

Bubbles

I thumped his pate, it sounded dull and
thuddy;

The former it has ever been; the latter
(Occasioned by the skull being thick with
muddy

Matter of the kind that doesn't matter)
Was matter still of mystery and study.

"Oh why," I shouted, "Mr. Dante, can't he
Sound hollow as he is? It is surprising,
Still, here are brains, however stiff!" But
Dante,

The history of the thick head analyzing,
Said, "Brains were never there. Upon a
hummock

The Devil ate a critic at a picnic.

The imps all yelled, 'Alas! You will be sick,
Nick!'

With nasty nausea knocking at his stomach,
'*Ook Blob!*' the Devil said. 'I cannot wait, an
Immediately necessary pot
Go get me—' Quick they skip to wait on
Satan—

'The emptiest receptacle you've got!'

Bubbles

Then over Hell the harum-scarums scurry
But nothing was so empty or so hollow
In Hell as was the head (which in a hurry
They brought) of him whose history we follow.
'Tis just the thing!' said Nick, 'Alack, you
waited

Almost too long!' then he evacuated
His vitals of his vomit in the skull,
And sent it to Chicago when 'twas full
To criticise imaginative meter."
Just here the Devil heaved him in a heater
To bake the other half. "Are you amused?"
Said Dante. I, a little bit confused,
Replied, "My answer must be quite symbolic.
In perfect evening dress a youth will, maybe,
While waiting for his girl, pick up the baby,
But when the little brat becomes hydraulic
He wishes that he hadn't. Not to kick,
This sight is so insipid I am sick.
Unbeautiful and bad is this bucolic,
I can't speak highly of Exhibit A."

Then Dante wheeled and striding led the way.

Bubbles

Achilles' ghost across the asphodel
Ran on low gear compared with him. "In
Hell,"

He said, "if one would know what hellish art
meant

We show the senatorial department.

'The windmill of the damned' the demons
call it,

The hall of howling Lodge and Bob La
Follette."

The former rose to speak. "O hold your nose!
You're

To witness mentally indecent exposure!"

Too late and needless was the warning uttered,
The speech was fine as pop-corn doubly
buttered.

Amazed, I cried, "O please explain to me
This copious bray become a symphony."

"Ridiculous when blatted in the senate
A speech of his may win blue ribbons when it
Is spoken in the place where it belongs."

I took the answer in my mental tongs,
Nor could believe that even here such brows

Bubbles

Were lauded. "Show," I said, "the lower House."

"There is no lower house than this! You know it!"

Explosively explaining, cried my poet,
And pulled his knitting needles out to knit
His brows; but draining off his spleen a bit,
He added, "If you mean the other branch
Of Congress, come along. I know the ranch,
We dead are all good neighbors." No
digression

We made, but entered while they were in
session.

The wild disorder told us they to order
Had called. The number present nine-and-
twenty;

Eleven groups, conversing round the border,
Were murmuring loud with laughter good and
plenty.

Behind their newspapers the rest were
sprawling,

Save what were snoring, and the member
bawling

Bubbles

His speech for the Congressional Recorder
Upon the Brimstone Tariff. No one heard him
Except himself and I perhaps have slurred him
To say that he did, since he let it go
Right on like rivers, time, and death and woe,
Save when some member came awake and
butted
Right in and rolled away again to sleep.
I bent above a cuspidor to weep
Until my cheeks with great ravines were
rutted,
It was so like my own, my native land,
While wandering on a foreign brimstone
strand.

But Dante called a jitney for to go.
"O bawl no more ! In Guinea or Gehenna
The pigeonholes that ought to hold these
men are.
Be cheerful. Next, what program shall I
show?"
I said, "Please show me your infernal women,
My social sensibilities I swim in."

Bubbles

We dug our toes into a mighty hill
And climbed like demons treading in a mill.
(Above Nisqually Canon, I've ascended
The castled crags of Eagle Peak; I've bended
From Glacier Point in lone Yosemite,
Sublime and swooning gulfs below to see;
And I have crossed the looming, jagged
Rockies;
Mount Shasta I have seen, and Mount
Rainier,
But never such a mountain as was here.)
We clambered up like adolescent gawkies
That climb a sandbank. Flying into passion,
I yelled, "Why climb? My bellows it
distresses!"
But Dante said, "This is the Height of
Fashion.
It holds those girls who cut so low their
dresses
They show to any peeping silly cuss
The suburbs of a bare umbilicus."
(One dictionary calls it *umbi-like-us*,
But this with approbation cannot strike us.)

Bubbles

Now this encouraged me a modicum,
And swiftly up the slanting road I come
And, scrambling o'er the top with many a
chuckle,

I snicker to watch Dante strain and knuckle
To keep in sight. He had been dead too long
His privileges to appreciate.

A glutton going from the grease he ate
Of pork, with brandy irrigation strong,
For mush and milk is hardly going to hanker.
It may be so with death. The coffins anchor
To earth our frail pathetic carcasses;
To any passion then to hark us is
Against the rule perhaps, but whether so
Or not, I am not hurried for to know.

Eschatologically curious
Ecclesiastics would be furious
If ere we finish this Apocalypse
Dim, bony, spectral Death should lock our
lips.

But suddenly we come upon the ladies.
The deeds of one world in the next run deeper,

Bubbles

Therefore the flesh from every piteous shade is
So torn away that naught is left to keep her
Canal of apparatus called digestive
(Nine yards or more) from rolling out un-
covered—

Her dress no longer merely is *suggestive*.
Behind the skirts of Dante close I hovered
And, bashful, asked if punishment so grim
Had cured them of their pride. This tickled
him,

Who, snickering, answered with urbanity,
“No! Fashion’s women have a vanity
That beats all Hell’s arrangements. Look
and see

How each before a mirror thinks that she
Surpasses all her mates and looks the best in
Her own peculiar tying of intestine
In curls around her neck or coils on head.”

I felt so sick that I could go to bed;
As one who bites a corpulent old worm, in
The rosy apple which it chose to squirm in,
Is sick, if he’s at all averse to vermin;

Bubbles

(Particularly if a worm's obese, he
Will taste so apoplectic, rank and greasy.)
So I was sick at seeing sights so grim in
The parlors of these poor infernal women.

"This party personally is conducted,"
Said Dante. "Not to have your fun obstructed
I feel responsible. Put on your glasses
And you will see perhaps some other lasses."
"I doubt if it would be considered proper,"
I said, "If one should come this way, go stop
her.

Show me a deacon or a minister
And take me to the Thursday evening meeting.
These girlyies are so bad, it's sinister
And naughty for me to receive their greeting."

Fat podded little dapper devils dotted
A dingle down the mountain. One had
knotted

His tail around his horns to save its sagging.
(He'd newly had it polished, and the dragging
Takes off the shine.) He trotted to the place,

Bubbles

With jack-o-lantern jolly grinning face.
He pointed straight at me and said to Dante,
"This boob would like to see our graveyard.

Can't he?

I'll show him all the dead ones for a quarter—
I used to be on earth. I was a porter."

I said, "Each other surely we have seen
July in nineteen hundred and fifteen,
At Yellowstone—Colonial—in twilight—"
He swore and spat his cud up through the
skylight.

I saw I had unjustly him offended,
My person in apology I bended,
And patted him upon the back and belly,
And said in words as nice as apple jelly:
"Your pardon—all the porters there were
vicious.

You have a humor that is quite delicious—
But what about that graveyard? When to God,
Or Hell, the soul is shelled out of one's pod
Like peas and beans, the earth retains the
bodies.

Bubbles

Say you that where the pea is there the pod is?"
The comicaest wriggle on his face is,
He says, "The circumstances alter cases."

A booming noise I heard. An impish bumpkin
Was dinging with a paddle on a pumpkin.
There are no church bells, as you know, in
Tophet,
They have to use a pumpkin, though it's
no fit.

"What's that?" I said. He said it was the
curfew.

"It tolls the knell of parting day. The
ploughman
Will plod—more likely he has plodded *now*,
man.

We worked him overtime, once, and the fur
flew.

But come, you Old Mortality, and look
On tombs—the landscape-garden scheme we
took

From *this*," he grinned—"Spoon River"
was the book.

Bubbles

I might have read among the tombs for ages,
He snickered—his proboscis in the pages.
I, questioning what bodies in this gulf are,
Read, peering through an afterglow of sulphur:

*“A skinner of skunk,
In the odor of sanctity
Died in his bunk;
The Almighty was thanked that He
Hauled into Heaven
Or hurled into Hell of him
All (it was little)
That one couldn't smell of him.”*

Of course the monuments were of asbestos,
Not ancient slate or granite. When we rest us
We buy the latter, and it costs big money—
The former was much better, it was funny;
And no memorial of any marble
Is cheering as the quaint old rhymes they
warble.

But here I saw a grave—this rich old boss
Refused me once a dime for the Red Cross.

Bubbles

*"His rarity
Charity,
Body (with soul
On a parity)
Rolled to this hole
For to wear it he
Growing too stingy
Escaped from the dingy
Old body so brittle
And left it behind him.
His soul is so little
The Devil can't find him."*

It seems that Hell foreclosed and took his
carcass

For soul he never had, and they were sharkers.

A tomb with finger pointing toward Arcturus
Disclosed this epitaph, the next to lure us:

*"His soul gone to God, he
Could preach like a river,
But here is his body,
Old Nick had his liver."*

I saw the name of one who was (though
bilious)

Bubbles

Sermonis factor atque Dei filius.

I looked at Jock. "Sometimes," with
cheerful nod, he
Replied, "We lose the soul and get the body.
Good soul he had, and still in glory hath,
This next one, but he wouldn't take a bath."

*"In bliss went his soul up
To swim
But Hell filled this hole up
With him."*

"Beneath those rugged elms, that yew tree's"
shadow
The turf had got the heaves—it puffed like
mad. O

Aghast I stood to see the puffs of smoke
That smelly from the gravetop often broke!

*"Smoked like a ham
Nearly black, O
How pickled I am
In tobacco!"*

So ran the lines and so I ran along,
But met another stink that stank so strong

Bubbles

I turned out for it, but it came across till
It filled and fumigated every nostril.
I wept some tears while Jock was weeping
 ichor
Then saw a brewer buried in his liquor;
Near him a drunkard wearing no apparel
(I peeked into the bung-hole) but a barrel.
The latter had a stone—but Jock grew warmer
And said that Hell would fain forget the
 former.

*“Pickled in booze is
My body. It snoozes.
My soul without stopping
Is howling and hopping.”*

Jock wiped his ichor with a snicker. “Mark!
This corpse,” he said, “o’erheard, when stiff
 and stark,
The undertaker talking of his *bier*—
Misunderstood; sat up, and answered, ‘Here!’”
“O Jock,” I cried, “what awful fibs you fib
 us!”
Jock answered, “He was always full or
 gibbous.”

Bubbles

Then rose a monument amazing, half
A mile in height which bore this epitaph:

*"Death cannot balk
Mr. Lucifer.
The Lord had her talk
And the Devil the use of her.
Neither was pleased
Till this monument squeezed
Out the juice of her."*

I said to Jock, "I think I'd better go
Back to my chaperon. This shocks me so!
It is a grave affair and it may squash
My taste for poetry." Jock answered,
"Bosh!"

Untied his peaked tail and scratched his back,
Then turned and trotted backward on his
track.

"I would not leave a brother in the lurch in
A graveyard," said the grinning little urchin.

We found old Dante sitting on a griddle,
Cracking the devil's mother-in-law a riddle.
Until, to pay the poet some diversion,

Bubbles

She caught and played an old sonorous fiddle
And sang as if her voice would split her middle
A song she called, "The Sabbath Day Ex-
cursion."

*"The Devil came dapper up out of his Hell,
La whoop! The Devil! La whoop!
The Devil he dallied at not a hotel,
To church went tripping his troop.*

*"The Devil came fiddling into the fold,
La whoop! The Devil! La whoop!
But he found the funny old flock so cold
The Devil half died of the croup.*

*"But he found the feel of the sermon so dry,
La whoop! for the croup in his group!
It cured him quick as a wink of the eye,
La whoop! The Devil! La whoop!"*

Insulted, all my kindly manners froze up.

I elevated, what I could, my nose up.

"You've waited, Dante. Sorry!" I said
with unction.

He said, "Though waiting isn't quite my
function

Bubbles

I much prefer this place to Essex Junction."
I asked him for a quarter, paid up Jock,
And said, "We'll now inspect another block."

Great guide was Dante! He would not get
lost on
The crookedest old corkscrew street in Boston;
He marched along—to tell the scenery
Would strain my epical machinery
And, since I have no other medium,
I'm torn with terror at the tedium
'Twould take to tell you how these creatures
carnal
Bump down to Tophet from enclosures
charnel,
Like water dropping through a colander,
Or a Kaiser turned to a count and Hollander.
I have been hunting—'twas monotony,
For beast or bird I never shot any,
And cheerfully I've cracked my Christmas
walnut
To find it half was worm instead of all nut,
But would not have you call my epic dull

Bubbles

When you have cracked it on your bony skull.
I've ploughed my mind—at least what's
arable

In hopes you'd chew this crop of parable.
But I must hasten—being Dante's Boswell
Is work that exercises both my jaws well.
We came past lakes of sinners, where they
burn 'em

With ceaseless conflagration *in aeternum*,
And Dante often cast a line to fish up
A dessicated deacon or a bishop.
I said, "If saints like these are in the lurch,
Where are those pesky pillars of the church
Who praise a minister before his features,
Then carp behind his back? They are the
creatures

Who praise a girl for teaching little kiddies,
Then poison neighborhoods against her."

"Hid is

To Hellish wisdom panging pain sufficient
To heckle hard enough such soul-deficient
And facially-reduplicated folk."

Bubbles

My guide here paused to gag. Again he spoke,
"Hell's science will not always be infirm on
The point, for we are using lots of German
Advice since Hindenburg encountered trouble.
But temporarily Beelzebub'll
Refuse to take the folks with faces double
Until the imps have split them into parts
As many as their faces, each which smarts
As if the total Tophet it had gotten—
They split quite easily, they are so rotten."

"Contentedly he cuddled in the ooze,"
Wrote Mrs. Stratton-Porter of a frog,
But like a hundred hiccoughing with booze,
Or half a hundred bullfrogs on a log,
I heard an orchestra of gulping sound,
And looked where ninety imps were scattered
round,
Each doubled with his sternum on his stomach,
Each crowned the crater of a brimstone
hummock.
Oh how the wretches retched in wretched woe,
All gagging to the tune of Old Black Joe!

Bubbles

Just then the Kaiser cannoned through the
roof,

(Of late, you know, it has been rather leaky,
And yet his passing didn't make a squeak, he
So little was of soul.) No badge of hoof
Or horn was needed for this person's proof.

I knew not how he fell, so feathery

His head was, but his heart was leathery.

"Keep *Watch upon his Rind*," said Satan,
turning

Unto the imps, "*and keep the home fires
burning!*"

But I had lost, as who of us has not?

All interest in this boss of *Herr von Gott*.

Across our road was an impediment

Which stopped my making all the head I
meant

To make. It was a big asbestos coffin

The imps were sending some poor fellow off in,

They nailed him in (they used their tails for
hammers)

"Why do you send him back?" the poet
stammers.

Bubbles

"He was a politician," said the devil.

"Though in his company on earth I revel,
This venture was a failure. We, with
unction,

And bus and band met him at Judgment Junction.

We brought him where we thought he couldn't
balk us,

Crowded the room with devils to the wall,

But he mistook us for an earthly caucus

And never knew the difference at all.

Last year the same mistake when a presiding

Elder was shunted off on Pitchfork Siding.

When we unloaded him, exhorterly

He cried, 'Now please provide my salary!'

He thought that I was Brother Mallory,

And we a conference—the quarterly.

Now, Dante, is there any courtesy

That I can show? You'll tear your shirt

I see

For this poor verdant innovator's sake;

You work so hard it almost makes me ache.

I'll show you Vanderfeller from the larder

Bubbles

Or cubist artist, or a free verse bard, or
Dust some Republicans stacked in the attic
(This world has lately been so Democratic!)
Or anything you want."

Then Dante cried,
"Come down! Come down, where Hell's
 worst woe is tried
And let us see, and let us hear him scream,
Your sorest tortured soul in pain supreme!"

"With pleasure!" Satan said, and led the
 way
Through mire, where snakes gigantic hissed
 at bay,
Through blowing furnaces of choking coke,
And seas of ink, where the Hearst papers soak,
By all the horror of the Prussian trenches,
Full dress receptions, ten artistic stenches,
Past all which pains the ear or stumps the
 nasal
Intake, the devil leads the way and pays all
The tips. At last he cried, "See yon abysses!"

Bubbles

Eventually, why not now! O this is
The place you sought, right bower, ace and
joker
Of all the tortures! Dickon, fetch the poker!"

I peered far down and saw a resident
Resembling much our honored President.
But something was amiss. The more they
poked him,
The more he laughed as if Mark Twain had
joked him,
The more they burned him with their fires
infernal,
The more he sang with happiness supernal.
The more they grilled him with their cannon-
ading,
The more he danced with jubilee unfading.
The devil sputtered, "Get the bill of lading,
There's something wrong!"

"Or shall I call the postman?"

I ventured.

"Shut your mouth or be a ghost, man!"

Bubbles

Said Satan, mad. "Were postal service
chosen,
He would not have arrived till *this* were
frozen."

(This with a gesture.) Up the burning bank
He called an officer who bore the rank,
Second Lieutenant, highest known on earth.

"Immediately justify this mirth!"

With mountain-shaking thunder roared the
devil.

"In harshest Hell why doth that mortal
revel?"

"Excuse me, Doctor Devil, he," I reckoned

"Misunderstandeth your diplomacy."

(It *does* look lame, writ in my pome, I see!)

He flailed me with his peaked tail a second,
Quite peeved that on his discipline I butted,
His brows like rocks at Marblehead both
juttet.

The officer, as was his wont, saluted
The devil, and thus the charges all confuted:

Bubbles

“This soul was sent us at three-fifty-seven,
By error, and should go at four-eleven.
He for the New Jerusalem was freighted,
But he got loaded wrong at Judgment
Junction.

(Trainmen are always careless of their
function.)

He was marked C. O. D. and nicely crated.
We took him just to please him—haven’t
told him

It isn’t heaven (as he believes) doth hold him.
The place he came from was so mean and
scrappy

That he with this relief is very happy.”

I felt concerned, for no one should, or *could*
row

The navy of state like our heroic Woodrow.
Just then I swooned, for flashing angels shone,
And when I woke, we poets were alone.

I asked of Dante, did he know New York?

(A credit to the populating stork)

He sobbed as sorrow of his life would rob him.

Bubbles

He wept, like bottles when you pull the cork,
So much I had to take a mop and swab him.
I cried, "O bard who dost not fear a gate
Of Hell, why take on so, and irrigate?"
He sobbed, "If I had known it earlier
The pearly gates had opened pearlier
To gulp me in. For who can write on Hell
Unless he knows New York? You know it
well?"

I answered, with a few apologies,
That I had lectured in its colleges
And inter-state assemblies just a little,
Also at banquets after eating victual,
And in the Metropolitan Museum
Have watched the pictures, for I love to see
'em,
There, too, I met an oriental mummy
Pickled so long that he was rather gummy.
And from the summit of the Woolworth
tower
Gazing aghast, afar, a thrilling hour,
I've seen the whole sublime, dumfounding
show,

Bubbles

With pismire autos crawling far below.
And I have even gone at evening dewy
To the celestial quarters of chop suey.
But only once I found a son of Satan—
In Stammer's bookstore on Fourth Avenue.
(Perhaps he's gone—I hope they *have* a new
And decent man the musty trade to wait on)
He had no manners—O I beg his pardon!
My conscience jabs me with a vicious jog;
My fellow mortal I would not be hard on—
He *had*—they were the manners of a hog.”
I, stopping to regard the somber bard on
The smoke upholstered (petrified) old log
Just heard, “It's one of Tophet's biggest
suburbs—
It looks colossal if you've known but a scrub
urbs.”

We rose to go and Dante asked if I
Would write to recommend him by and by,
That is, if I approved him as a pilot.
“I'm glad,” I said, “Such writing falls to *my* lot.
For you and Virgil have the run of Hell,

Bubbles

No other guides could learn it half so well,
And Virgil's getting old." He bowed and
stooped,
Delighted that he had the business cooped.

Then suddenly he cocked his eye and squinted
Into my face. "What troubles you?" he
hinted.

"I'm doleful for each dismal dufferin
Those deeps of senatorial suffering.
I love so much our own good Dillingham
That I could never think of grilling him.
The father of a rural cleric, a
Good father, best in all America
Once told his booby boy in auld lang syne,
'There is your model dignified and fine,
A noble gentleman!' And now 'tis night,
And father's in his grave, and he was right.
Besides, when dad was little, from a bully
This statesman saved him. I respect him
fully.

And when I write up Hell's geography
I'd think that such men from its bog are free."

Bubbles

“Well, did you see him here?” said Dante,
gaunter

With care, “The climate’s hot for a Ver-
monter.”

“Of Washington I’ve had a sniff, I can’t
Find necessarily significant
A statesman’s being absent from his pew, it
Is frequent.” Dante chortled then, “Why,
Hewitt!

When these arrived I saw them sally by,
And I can swear your man an alibi.”

We walked where burning sulphur and blue
smoke

Resembled gloaming on July the Fourth,
And Dante took my arm and kindly spoke
Of me as poet (which is praise much worth.)
I, modest, answered thus the bard sublime:
“Not so, but I manipulate in rhyme
A knack—a knack an academic hack
(This measure cackles like a cuckoo clock,
Or maybe hiccoughs) likes to kick and knock,
But cannot kill. Ambition is eternal

Bubbles

And I am bound to be a bard infernal,
Just like yourself! When I go back to earth,
I'll write my own *Inferno* by my hearth!"

Then red with anger as a poppy, right
On me he turned. "You steal my copyright?
You dare not, plaigarist obstreperous,
With imitated poems pepper us!"
He, mad as Agamemnon, bitter bard,
Gave me a kick jack-asinine and hard,
Which hurled me out of Hell and broke the
bars.
Thence issuing, I again beheld some stars.

November, 1919.

Bubbles

PARADISE AND THE FINANCIAL AGENT.

One morn a steward at the gate
Of Heaven stood disconsolate.
(Appropriated nearly whole,
That rhyme from Tommy Moore I stole.)
That steward stood at the key-hole
And whined in quavering voice and thin,
"Oh, please! I want to come like sin,
O Simon Cephas Peter, in!"
And Peter, puttering about,
Said, drawling, "That I do not doubt.
What did you do while you were out?"
"My life I passed without a smirch,
Financial agent of the church
On Greenhorn Hills of backwoods birch!"

"And penniless left you in the lurch
Your pastor?"
"No, he had his pay,
Each dollar, ere he went away,

Bubbles

On Conference's opening day.
Four hundred (oft my work was praised)
Per annum dollars I have raised!"

Saint Peter scratched his pate and gazed,
And said, "Each year of all these years
Leave you the salary in arrears
Till Conference by coming clears
The debt away? Thyself didst hump
To hoard in one almighty lump
The pay o'erdue by seven moons?
Then, strutting midst thy fellow loons,
Didst boast that thou so well hadst done
What should have ended ere the sun
Rose on the morning 'twas begun?
To payless parson how shall come
His intervening crunched crumb?
How shall a payless parson put
Shirt on his back or boot on foot?
There is a natural body and
There is a spiritual, understand
I perfectly, but I insist
By much that man the mark has missed

Bubbles

Who, deep in indecorum, goes
Around arrayed in spiritual clothes
From natural neck to natural toes.
Elucidate as I expect,
 Ere turns the pearly knob,
Your disappointing, plain neglect
 Of your appointed job."

"O Simon Cephas Peter, see!
I catch the cash more easily
Within a week of Conference.
And week by week to pay the pence
Would, since I am so busy, bring
Delay unto my sugaring,
Or harrowing, or harvesting.
Now I am ready to come in."

But S. C. Peter grun a grin
And said, "All pass these portals free
 Except financial agents. They
Come on collected salary
 Which fully in advance we pay
To reimburse them for the work
Which they accomplished in the kirk."

Bubbles

"I waive all claims of any size,"
That agent said, with tearful eyes,
"Just let me sit in Paradise!"
But Peter answered, "Otherwise
The Lord has willed. Your ticket here
Is salary for one full year,
Which we collect and pay."
"Then please," he snivelled now in fear,
"To do it right away."

"Oh no!" said Peter. "Wait a bit.
Your ways we copy; hence
We will attempt to gather it
Just prior to the time we sit
In Annual Conference."

A terror took that tearful man.
"O Lord, how long," he said,
"Before in Heaven sit I can,
On milk and honey fed?"

"Our Conference is closing now,"
Said Peter. "The next will be

Bubbles

In just one Heavenly year, and how
 'Twill figure you may see.
With a day of God's a thousand years,
 Three hundred days and sixty-five,
Ten centuries long each one—grave fears
I have that with a pair of steers
You could walk around the Zodiac,
Gee-hawing half the distance back,
Ere Heavenward you arrive.
Three-sixty-five the days are quite,
 But it is fair I should declare
That since in Heaven is no night
 A day is quite a long affair."

*Read before the Vermont Conference,
 Richford, April, 1913.*

Bubbles

HOMER'S SPILLIAD.

Sing, Heavenly Muse, the wrath of me,
A puling poet doomed to be;
And since I would the critical nod earn,
Sing like split of something modern!
Your office is so far, I am
So poor, send inspiration, ma'am,
By telephone and cablegram;
But sing like thunder—don't refuse, it's
A song I want of Massachusetts,
Not Ida, Ilion, or Greece,
But automobile and police.
Of invocation there is no more—
I introduce my hero, Homer.

Flat on his back, with gnashing teeth,
His busted "benzine cart" beneath—
While he was black with grease and dust,
The air was blue with words he'd cussed.
He thought a lot of other rot, too,

Bubbles

He couldn't quite express (ought not to)
Before at last he fixed his auto.

He wriggled out, attacked his dirt;
He shook his coat, he brushed his shirt,
He excavated both his ears;
He washed his face, he combed the spears
Of porcupiney pointing hair,
Then cranking up his car he glided
To where his lady love resided,
Inquiring, Might he see her there?

When met by maiden at the gate,
The weather he had loudly lauded.
"You want my mistress?" Homer nodded.
"Respectfully I beg to state
The lady thought it long to wait—
Is riding with another fellow."

Then red and green he grew and yellow
And black at that announcement which
Made him resemble jaundice, pitch,
A Turner sunset, and the Itch.
He turned away, he said his prayers—

Bubbles

The servant thought so—they were swears—
He stumbled o'er the family pet
Whose purpose juvenile was set
Upon the auto horn to toot;
But Homer, ere he made a hoot,
Repudiating his intention,
Had spanked his—what I shouldn't mention.
Then looking down the road afar,
Receding, bounding o'er a bar,
He recognized his rival's car.

“To ride with me the girl agreed—”
He swore. “At least I'll make them speed,
And she shall see that cart of his
As slow as Evolution is!
I'll chase him down and show him up!”

As bums get boozy by the bottle,
Intoxicated by his cup
Of rage, he hastened to unthrottle
His leaping car and let her go.
Recked he of consequences? No!
No dread of fine nor law is his,

Bubbles

Nor dollars, death, nor damages.
He leaped into his seat, and oh!
Full speed, he let her rip and go.
He let her go, full speed, high gear—
Sing, Muse, like the Old Harry here!—
Oh down the dizzy road which swam
In underneath the speeding car,
He shot like lightning, grunting “Damn!”
As over every water bar
He jumped with savage bumping bout,
Half jiggling his intestines out.
By turned-out team and dodging man
And swirling trees he shrieked and ran
Like candidates in politics.
By pole and post, like whirling sticks
Upon a hurricane leaping past,
He sped, like a rifle bullet fast,
And never aside an eye he cast.
A cloud of dust behind him this
Like Nebular Hypothesis—
He neither knows nor cares a kiss.
His hand is firm to guide and goad
The shooting car along the road.

Bubbles

By houses high and homely huts
He glides and bounds and honks and squeals.
A yellow dog beneath his wheels
A geyser makes of blood and guts.*

He gains upon his rival—see!
One spurt more, neck and neck they'll be!
“Way, or I take a wheel!” he cried.
His rival sped, and way denied.
Like lightning still he chases him. It's
Now (neither cares) the city limits.
The houses and the folks grow thick
Together and the latter sick
With fear of death, as dodging quick
The traffic scatters far and wide.
Policemen pussy puff and stride
And shout at Homer hot with hate,
“M-A-S-S Six Thousand Eight!
Stop or I shoot as sure as fate!”
He scarce can turn to thumb his nose
Ere on, full speed, high gear, he goes!

* I don't know what this word means, but it must be something pretty nice, for it was loudly applauded when General Edwards used it to describe our boys in France.

Bubbles

A pistol crack, a tire is burst,
But not till Homer crashes first
Into his rival's car—both cursed.
Like rockets flew a lamp and wheel
And forty splinters—Hark! a squeal!
Then from the wreck rose bitter moans
Where, catapulted on the stones,
The girl was hurled with cruel vim
Which broke her leg—beg pardon—*limb!*—

While Homer's car with sudden flop
Capsized, but ere its final stop,
He somersaulted to the top,
Then tumbled down and struck a cop
Full in the shins. At once pell mell he
Went sprawling. The policeman's belly
Upon him plumped to make him jelly.
While Homer squirmed and kicked and
wiggled
The gleeful urchins gaped and giggled.
When from the incumbent cop he wriggled,
Upon his face the city gutter
Had spread its dirt as thick as butter.

Bubbles

He had to hawk and spit and sputter
And blubber, ludicrous to utter.

Ere thrice he stamped, ere twice he spat,
The cop arose, picked up his hat
And donned it—pot without a bail—
And hustled Homer off to jail.

Thanks, for assistance as desired,
The epic's done. The Muse is fired.

Bubbles

AN AUTOMOBUBBLESOME TROUBLE- SOME SONG.

Though Job he had troubles,
And friends who deserved them all,
Automobubbles
Had never unnerved them all.
Double
His trouble
An automobubble
Will make for the patientest man,
Who will crawl the car under,
Profaner than thunder,
To tinker it right if he can.

O Solomon married
A lot he ought not to,
But what if he'd carried
Them all in his auto?
Double
The trouble
An automobubble

Bubbles

Would have made for that much married
man.

When he rides let him snub all
His feminine club all
He possibly peaceably can!

O Naaman noble
Who washed in the Jordan
Washed no automobile,
And couldn't afford one.
For double
His trouble
An automobubble
Will make for the man with the rag!
Oh rub-a-dub-dub'll
He rub all and scrub all
The grime from the crank to the tag!

Thy driving though, Jehu,
We read it was furious,
Cops never see you
To speed law injurious.
Double

Bubbles

Thy trouble
An automobubble
Would bring to a scorcher like thee,
When called on the docket
To empty the pocket
For busting the city's decree!

Even Jonah who sank
In a whale that had swallowed him
Broke not a bank
And no bill ever followed him.
Double
His trouble
If an automobubble
Instead of a whale he had got,
Which swallowed the prophet
But came back to cough it
Ashore, which the bubble doth not.

Bubbles

UNHOLY SCRIPTURES.

Read from the Speaker's chair before the Vermont Legislature at various intervals in the Mock Sessions of 1913 and 1915.

ON CERTAIN ULTIMATE RITES:

(Enter the Chaplain in full clerical raiment, with open book. After him the Sergeant-at-Arms, with a huge coffin being carted out by the janitor and the fireman. These come to bury Caesar, not to praise him.)

Chorus of Spectators.

Feet first down the corridor
Cart that corpse, 'tis horrider
Than any other you can find from Canada
To Florida.

Chorus of Members.

Our reputation's dead!
The member from Peru

Bubbles

Has knocked it in the head,
Has talked it very dead,
 Boo! Hoo! Hoo!

Chorus of Spectators.

To the weird lamentation
 We listen, we hark us.
Their own reputation,
 Oh that is the carcass.
And what could kill such?
 Oh listen then, hark!
'Twas taking too much
 Peruvian Bark!

On Divers Celebrities:

The doorkeeper said with a grin
To a child with a chattering chin,
 "This wisdom and virtue,
 I think it won't hurt you;
Come in, little kiddie, come in!"

Said the member from Londonderry
"I much prefer to have nary

Bubbles

A law upon game.

Please abolish that same,

It is very contemptible, very!"

The committee commanded by Proctor

Made a sawdust bill which shocked a

Member (McClellan)

Who came at her yellin'

And skeeder-e-deedle he knocked her.

When the Overpass matter we dinned on,

The eminent member from Lyndon

To eternity blew

"The whole how-de-do"

By turning a lot of his wind on.

On the Bull Moose Orator:

Hark! 'Tis Jose, the gent from Johnson,

Singing his refrain,

Talking all the time he wants on

Eminent Domain!

Bubbles

On Hapgood and His Two Mortal Foes:

O Happygood out of Peru,
If any say aught against you
 He will soon have a tilt on
 With Coburn of Milton
And Ryder of Rockingham too!

On Introducing Dr. Coburn of Milton:

A divinity doctor am I
 And a doctor of medicine he;
So you see our diversities lie
 Not in kind but in only degree.

Where the lines of our studying fall
 There we follow them, differing still;
For I read the Epistles of Paul,
 And he the apostles of Pill.

We agree disagreeably now,
 But, doctor, we may not forget
Though no Saint of the Pillar art thou,
 Thou art a pillar of saints—better yet!

Bubbles

If I lie at the door of the death
Your doctoring helpeth me through.
If you lie, little more than a breath
Bringeth down all my doctrine on you.

Then, *medice*, mortal, and worm,
I'll endeavor your devils to ban
If merry *in terra* so firm
You will keep me as long as you can.

On the Last Day of School:

Now as sure as death and taxes
Legislature's over.
Earth flops round upon its axis,
Just the same old rover;
But the onset on the "offset"
And all things like that are
Done. Here's pay. The state which coughs it
Up is glad you scatter.

Though we kicked and cuffed, all quarter
Asking, giving, never,
Don't you kind of think we "ort ter"
Be firm friends for ever?

Bubbles

On Balaam's Livery Stable:

Balaam, to and fro to pass,
Bought, long ago, one little ass;
Balaam now, grown better able,
Builds a granite livery stable;
And that stable is the great house
Common people call the state house.
Balaam's beast ate oats and hay,

His temper was a mild one;
But his posterity to-day
Live on their four-per-diem pay,
And take no oats but wild ones.

Balaam's beast (see Bible) got
Excited and right in did butt.
It took a miracle to ope
The mouth which now we dare not hope
That any miracle could shut;
For when to Balaam's barn you come,
You hear, on any day,
From morning's dawn to gloaming's gloam,
Resounding far away,
From cellar door to golden dome,
One universal bray.

Bubbles

BLINK OF THE MOON.

When Bill came home at Halloween,
The drunkenest mortal ever seen
By the blinking moon at middle night,
He staggered left, he staggered right,
For past the middle of October,
It's difficult to keep quite sober.
He chuckled, "That was bully cider!
By gosh, I wish this road were wider
And went the same way all the time.
I'd give that meeting-house a dime,
If when the highway crooks, the dunce
Would not crook 'round both ways at once."
(It's understood his words came thick up,
But when we write we skip the hiccough.)

Then heavenward he cocked his eye,
Threw back his head and slapped his thigh,
While chuckling laughter shook his throat,
Amused to see four moons afloat

Bubbles

In skies that used to have but one.
All nature joined in Billy's fun
And paid him deep respect tonight.
Who ever saw a church polite
Enough to poor wayfaring people
To bow "Good eve" with nodding steeple?
Bill staggered, backed, and made a lurch,
Then stopped, and to the nodding church
Took off his hat, and with a bow
Gulped, "Glad to meet you anyhow!"

There was a puddle in the road
Wherein the moon reflected showed.
"My head feels big as Camel's Hump,
I guess I'll set down on this stump
And rest awhile," Bill said. The same
He did, and didn't miss his aim.
The splash put Billy in a muddle.
"By gosh it is a cider puddle
And not a stump!" He bent and drank
Then spat, with face an utter blank,
And said, "There's just one thing to say,
And that is, Brethren, Let us pray!"

Bubbles

He sat awhile in thought, looked silly,
Then staggered up, for it was chilly,
And mumbled, "Guess I ought to, maybe,
Tell mother she must mind the baby!"

Then blazed his anger out to see
By yonder moonlit cemetery
Somebody, staggering around
And reeling over yards of ground,
Look straight at him in mockery
As if he thought him drunk to be.
Bill rushed, and o'er the culprit's head
He raised his fist. "Take that!" he said;
And striking, cracked his knuckle bone
On Granny Glidden's tall gravestone.

Oh far asquint his vision went
Who took for man a monument!
Alas! O Bill, the deed is done!
'Twere better to burn thy bosom bone
In Hell, to make thy ribs a roast,
Thy heart a hash, to spit thy liver,
For deed like thine hath no forgiver!

Bubbles

Oh then upstarted Granny's ghost!
Bill gazed aghast, stiff as a post.
"Oh who is he? Oh who is he?"
With eldritch screaming uttered she,
*"Who dares so wicked for to be
As knock my gravestone over me?"*
The words, so fearfully she shot 'em,
Bill lost his balance as he caught 'em,
And, open mouthed, sat on his bottom.

That beldam, dead a hundred years,
Yanked off his head clean to his ears,
And down her coffin's empty shell
She dumped it bounding down to Hell.
With lank and corpsey clammy hand
She snatched a pumpkin from the land,
A hollow pumpkin, green and great,
And clapped it on him for a pate.

So Bill went home in sorry fix
And straightway entered politics.
One glance upon his head men give,
Then vote him representative.

Bubbles

LINES

Omitted by Mistake From
BUCHAN'S ANCIENT BALLADS OF
THE NORTH.

Hynde William was a Poet bauld
Wha raise at half past three
Whan inspiration came till him,
Says "Wull ye write or dee?"

Nimbly, nimbly raise he up,
And nimbly pat he on,
And nimbly sat he doun at desk
Until his task was done.

Then he's awa to editor's yetts
And tirl'd at the pin.
"O sleep ye, wake ye, editor,
Ye'll rise and lat me in."

He turned him right and round about,
That editor, did he;
"O where will I find a little wee boy,
Will open the yetts for me?"

Bubbles

“O here am I, a little wee boy,
Will open the yetts for thee.
Now Heaven thee save, thou brave editor,
Now Heaven thee save and see!”

The first an pull he gave the door
He saw him, cheek and chin;
The next an pull he gave the door
Hynde William walked right in.

Then out an spake that poet bauld
“Now Heaven thee save and see,
For I hae written a braid poem
Which thou shalt print for me.”

He had not scanned a line at a’
Nor read a line but ane,
Before that editor lusty was
To break his collar bane.

“O wae mat worth ye, Hynde William,
Ye’se get a berry-brown steed
And gang awa to gude squeel-house
And ken to write and read.”

Bubbles

“O rede me, rede me, brother dear,
My rede shall rise at thee.
Win up, win up, Sir Editor,
Ye’se hear these lines o’ me.”

He had not heard a line, a line,
A line, but barely four,
He pat his thumb until his nose
And pointed till the door;

He turned him right and round about,
Wi’ mony waefu’ swears;
“O busk ye, busk, my merry men all
And kick him doun the stairs!

“And gin he be a single man
His bodie I’ll give to thee,
But gin he be a married man
High hangit shall he be.”

O forty yards off editor’s yetts
’Tis twenty stairs below
Where lies the guid hynde William kicked
By prowess of his foe.

Bubbles

Sair, sair is William's head,
And sair at heart is he;
He hath for his braid poem got
No gowd nor white monie.

And he's awa to gude green-wood
As fast as he could gang,
And wi' a crack his heart did break,
And sae this ends the sang.

July 26, 1910.

Bubbles

BRIDGET O'BRIEN.

O Bridget O'Brien
And I
For Ireland sigh on
The sly
For the Emerald Island
Of Ireland, my land,
I dream and I smile and
I cry.

But Paddy O'Brien
I fought
Till the fool had to lie on
His cot.
He was drunken and blinking;
So never once shrinking
I told him the thinking
I thought.

"O Paddy O'Brien,
O why,

Bubbles

When the prices are high on
Good rye,
Why not stick to the water
The way that you ought ter?
You're a lot straighter trotter
When dry!"

But Paddy O'Brien
Would not
Quit keeping his eye on
The pot
Of liquor—its lover
He lived in the clover
And wobbled all over
The lot.

But Bridget O'Brien
Would cry,
The tear would not dry on
Her eye.
"O Paddy, my laddie,
O is he so bad, he
To Satan will gad?" He
Will try.

Bubbles

So Paddy O'Brien,
The sot,
One day had to die on
The spot.
In the graveyard a gash is,
The priest with wet lashes
Says, "Ashes to ashes
We've got."

So Bridget O'Brien
And I
For Ireland sigh on
The sly.
For the Emerald Island
Of Ireland, my land,
We'll sail in a while—and
Good-bye!

Bubbles

DUNCAN BLISS.

Grips a grief the heart like this,
Not to have a dearie,
Sweetheart or wife, to kiss
When the world gets weary?

No, decided Duncan Bliss,
Calling on his dearie.
That was why he stole a kiss,
By the ingle cheery.

Wicked work it was, I wis,
But he didn't fear he
Would be cuffed for kissing this
Saucy little dearie.

"Don't you want to marry, Miss?
I will help you, dearie."
"Duncan, O you donkey, yes!
Waiting makes me weary!"

Bubbles

LONGING.

When gipsies in the gloaming go
The daisied banks between,
And orioles are singing low
Along the village green,

The cares of church I would resign
And all the state's annoy,
And be as long, in auld lang syne,
A farmer's happy boy.

Bubbles

THE FAILURE.

His heart was so full that he couldn't help
singing,
So singing he dared.
Some noticed with laughter, but nobody
listened,
And nobody cared.

While softly the laureate poets went smiling
Through flattering throngs,
He crushed out of sight, with a heart that was
breaking,
His little dead songs.

Bubbles

POLLY FOSS.

Polly Foss the fields across
·Heard the cow bell tinkle.
Polly, calling “Bossy, Boss,”
Came with eyes atwinkle.

Pastures green, the bars across,
Buttercups besprinkle,
And they toss at Polly Foss—
“Ho! Here’s Billy Winkle!”

Farmer Foss, come get your “boss”—
Tinkle—tonkle—tinkle!
Polly’s on the mound of moss—
So is Billy Winkle!

Bubbles

SONG OF PUMPKIN BLOSSOM HILL.

Sing a song of pumpkin blossoms,
Yellow how they shine!
Sprawling greener than a bean or
Ivy crawls the vine.

Polly picked a pumpkin blossom,
Put it on her hat.
Billy grumbled while she fumbled,
“Naughty girl was that!”

“I should have a pumpkin blossom
Nodding on my top,
Silly bumpkin, since a pumpkin
Head you carry—” “Stop!”

Chasing through the pumpkin blossoms
Tripped a tangled toe,
Two a sprawling in the crawling
Vines together go.

Bubbles

Rolling in the pumpkin blossoms,
 Soon he picked her up,
Tousled, tumbled, but unhumbled—
 Gurgling laughter cup!

“Pay for picking pumpkin blossoms;
 Take your talking back!”
Polly wouldn't, so (he shouldn't)
 But he stole a smack!

Bubbles

IN HUSKING TIME.

Hallelujah! How the clarion
Of the rooster calls the morn!
Bring the basket for the husking
Of the golden ears of corn.
Golden is the sun, and golden
Balls of pumpkins fill the floor;
To the golden hills of autumn
Open wide the double door.

Blessed barn to face the sunrise
Haloing the stacks of stooks.
Rustle, rustle! We are happy
Nestling in our cosey nooks,
Husking corn that is as yellow
As a wedding ring, or red
As an apple, or the ruby,
Or the lips of Brownie-head.

Rustle! Rustle! Rip the husk off!
Gurgle, bubble! Laughter clear!

Bubbles

Rattle, rattle in the basket—

When I find a ruby ear

Brownie-head will let me kiss her

Sweetest spot that I may pick!

Rustle! Rip! O ruby kernels—

Go away, you reader, quick!

Bubbles

THE WITCHERY OF THE WEIRD.

O hist ye, hist! And have ye seen
The owl in the branches bare?
"Tu-whit! Tu-whoo! 'Tis Halloween!"
He hoots to the haunted air.

In silhouette against the moon,
On the pasture hill remote,
The dismal cow uplifts a croon
Out of her hollow throat.

Devils are dancing on the green
Now black with lifeless leaves,
And sail the hags of Halloween
Over the cottage eaves.

Their broomsticks on the windy waves
Shiver and dip, till soon
The ghosts come creeping out of their graves,
Under the gibbous moon.

Bubbles

The man in the moon is grinning back
At the witchery of the night,
And the gibbering jack-o-lanterns crack
A smile at the silly sight.

Bubbles

OLD TATE.

Death took the wind for a mop stick,
He took the surf for a swab,
He wiped old Tate from the slate of Fate
And whistled at the job.

'Tis a hundred years thereafter,
But the wild old widow walks;
Death dare not touch the like of such
In one of her grizzled locks.

And that is why by the midnight sky
On the lonely Isles of Shoals
A hag will yell like hollow Hell
When the flood tide breaker rolls.

And that is why I would rather lie
Naked out in the night
For snakes all black to creep on my back
Than to come into her sight.

March 27, 1913.

Bubbles

OUR MAIDEN VOYAGE TO THE ISLES OF SHOALS.

With an undulant motion,
Long, lazy and rocking,
We sailed on the ocean,
The *mal de mer* mocking.

In the midst of our laughter
The lasses were paling—
“Look aft! and look after
Them!”—bowed on the railing.

(Now shame on the lassie,
Before we could stop her,
To Neptune so sassy
As toss him her supper!)

And still on the ocean
Our motor went walking,
With an undulant motion,
Long, lazy and rocking.

Hampton Beach, July, 1911.

Bubbles

RHYMING THE BOOMING BRINE.

In the laziness on Hampton Beach we lay
And fashioned rhymes to fool the time away.

A mother on her Baby Blue-eyes looked
At play, and dreamily her rhyme she booked:

“Blue pail and yellow paddle,
And tousled curls of yellow,
And dimpled legs that straddle
The sinky sands so mellow,
The gladdest baby
Living may be
This bubbling little soul
With eyes like sun-up, taking
Delight alike in making
A castle or a hole.”

And then a lover with his heart awlirl,
(Just ere he left us) wrote “The Bathing Girl:”

Bubbles

“Ten tiny toes that trip at ease
The ocean sands of afternoon,
A lassie tousled by the breeze—
Were ever such laughing lips as these?
Her legs are naked to her knees
And white as the twilight moon,
And laughingly the lapsing seas
Will lave them soon—
O blessed waves and ocean breeze
To have the boon!”

The green landlubber then mislaid his wit
And wrote his rhyme without the use of it:

“Gosh! They’ve got a
Lot o’
Water
More ’n they oughter
In the sea!
This is not a
Place for me!”

“You carnal clod!” we cried, but he was gone,
Just as the priest gave us his rhyme to con:

Bubbles

"Why moans the sea for evermore?

It moans that soon will be
Fulfilled the doom foretold of yore,
'And there was no more sea'"

"O strolling sailor boy in navy blue,
Before you pass us by, what rhyme have you?"

"The sapphire sea is under me,
The sun by the zenith hung,
The sky is like an azure bell,
The sun its tolling tongue.
The sky is a bluebell—O we go
Over the sky-blue sea
With sails that are whiter than the snow,
Bright angels winging free!"

When suddenly a rhyme from me they sought,
I only wrote the simple thing I thought:

"In Heaven there is no more sea—
I do not ask for more;
I only wish that there may be
As much as sang for you and me
On Hampton's happy shore."

Bubbles

GLIS.

A glossy and airy
Young fairy is this,
A glorious fairy,
The glittering Glis.

Ten stars in the sky
And the moon doth he claim;
He is big as a fly
And to glory doth aim.

He is airy and light
In aerial dances
And fearless in fight
With the deadliest lances.

For he straddled a bug,
A pine needle he took,
And he slaughtered a slug
That crawled by the brook.

Bubbles

No terrors gigantic
His sport can dismay
Or fright from romantic
Adventures away.

For a seed he pulled loose,
Then he shot it in frolic
Against a gray goose,
Which gave her the colic.

His courage a wonder
In fairyland showed
When he walked up in under
A terrible toad!

But he loved (and most madly)
A butterfly gay
Who abused him so badly
He bawled all the day.

She declared him too small
For a bridegroom, but he
Went and sucked a puffball
And grew big as a bee.

Bubbles

So now may he marry
The airy young miss,
And a jubilant fairy
Is glorious Glis.

Bubbles

THE INQUEST.

The minister lay dead.
The coroner he said,
“Did anybody murder he?”
They answered all, “It couldn’t be!”
“He’s doubtless very dead,”
(That coroner he said)
“I hope he ate
No opiate
And deadened by the dope he ate
A suicide
He blew aside
His life!”
His wife
Said, “Oh dear me!
They paid his salary
Which frightened he
Infernally.
It is thus that matters rest:
Igitur necatus est.”

Bubbles

EPISCOPAL APOSTROPHE.

Written in 1908 on the fly leaf of Miley's Systematic Theology, but later spoken at a banquet where the writer was toastmaster and the two Bishops Hamilton were present.

Mortals Episcopal,
Ruling the Church,
Speak, is it riskable
We should address you,
Aloft on your perch?
Loth to distress you,
Ye bishops, we bless you—
We honor all such!
Vos salutamus,
Timemus, amamus,
Et semper laudamus,
But why will you cram us
With knowledge so much?
Here in "Theodicy"

Bubbles

Little of God I see.
Papers unpractical
(Part of them cracked, I call)
Conference History,
Critical mystery
Musty, or mythical
Radicals, Ethical
Tomes—you require of me
These, and desire me,
Sans all apology,
Soteriology
Plus anthropology,
 Which I must learn,
Plus angelology,
Plus eschatology,
 Till I discern
How the Divinities
Fill the infinities;
 What an infernally
Hideous din it is
 Down where eternally
 Devils abound.
Doctrines Arminian

Bubbles

Here have I found;
Fables Socinian
Jostle around
In my brain diabolical
Aching like colic, all
Taking a part
In ripping the rollick all
Out of my heart.

But a book you abridge in all
Ages no section—
The dry and the muddy
Alike I must study
Until I've original
Sin to perfection!

Producing this cud is
No part of my studies,
But take it and chew it,
Remembering blood is
In the eye of one

HEWITT.

Bubbles

FRAE ANE TO T'ITHER.

A Poetical Epistle.

Sin' Bobbie Burns could be sae civil
As write the muckle meddling devil,
I think nae mortal mouth should cavil
 Gin I should write
The friend o' mony a merry revel
 This eldritch night.

I wi' the Muses hae my dances
Like Bobbie—ither circumstances
Make similar enough, it chances,
 This writing to
That note of Bobbie's whilk enhances
 Its value noo.

Gin I to Satan wrote (emotion
Of sympathy would prompt this notion)
I'd for his comfort gie this lotion:
 “Auld Hornie, tell

Bubbles

“Why don’t ye fill your mouth wi’ Ocean
And spit on Hell?”

But sin’ I scribble to anither
I call your kind attention hither,
And first remark about the weather
The which is hot—
Perhaps I might begin, though, rather
More as I ought!

Plainfield, Vermont, day number twenty
Of May in nineteen hundred—plenty,
High Street, and parlor of my shanty,
My greetings go
Post haste unto an ancient *enty-*
Gruntie I know.

(Search na’ the lexicon wi’ labor,
Or carve wi’ critical bright saber
The pages o’ the poet Faber
To find that word.
My lug aince nested frae a neighbor
That bonnie bird.)

Bubbles

Wee, modest, crimson Howard Flower,
I met thee in a canny hour,
The stage-coach clattering o'er the stoure
 Frae Barton to Glover,
To spare thee then was past my power,
 Thou novel-lover.

Thy face to-night would memory borrow,
Together oft we've killed our sorrow,
And when I mind me that the morrow
 Thy birthday is,
I wish thee well in peace or war, oh!
 Next warld an' this!

I've divil a bit o' book or money,
Nor pickayune o' pig or honey,
Nor ither present hae I ony,
 Though much I rue it,
But I maun offer, sad or funny,
 The hand o'

HEWITT.

Bubbles

TO J. HOWARD FLOWER:

Because I have not heard a word at all,
I know not if you are in Paradise,
Or by the sexton if interred at all,
Or dead, or sick, or single. Marriedwise
Perchance you live with lady beautiful.
If 'tis the last, and you're undutiful
To her as to your friends (for instance me)
High hangit will she wish you for to be.

I had a friend in Glover—minister,
Although a heretic combustible,
On whom the medieval sinister
Infallibles forthwith would thrust a bull
To excommunicate all such as he,
And some not sinners quite so much as he.
But I discuss not here his piety;
What has become of his society?

I had a friend in Glover—you it was;
I thought you were a friend eternally,

Bubbles

As true as any lover. True it was

You vacillated most infernally.

The wine of friendship, more than Bacchanal,
Port, Burgundy and Falstaff's sack and all—
I poured this friendship in, unskeptical,
A leaky, squirting old receptacle.

Though you are wise and I am rustical,

Men save e'en suckers when they land
'em, lad.

You need not think to go uncussed at all,

To this "*Quod erat Demonstrandum*" add
Except you write to me incontinent,
Then write to you again I won't anent
Or this or any other proposition,
Though it would save you from defunct
condition.

What is the cause of this apostasy?

Three years, if rightly I have read it all,
You have to me been wholly lost, I see.

Is it because you are not wed at all,
While I, once bachelor, am benedict?

Bubbles

Why, being double, I can then addict
Myself to friendship doubly. Reason this,
Then think how culpable your treason is.

But you, perhaps, a lovely lady woo,
And, occupied in plighting troth, a sis
Like her, all starry, makes us shady who
Are dim as nebular hypothesis.

Or is it my religion, attitude
In politics, or written platitude
That makes your love no longer genuine?
Can you afford to lose the men you win?

O Flower, come and take an antidote
For these abuses, bringing back a ray
Of comradeship into my shanty, dote
With me on Dickens, Reade, and Thackeray.
My prejudice against the latter is
Demolished all before his batteries,
And if I long am gone from Dickens, oh
My literary stomach sickens so!

Sir Walter always was the king of them,
Supreme the Waverley Romances are;

Bubbles

But you would never have a thing of them,
And still opine the same, the chances are.
But I won't quarrel; come but back again,
And we will read in Twain or Black again;
Cervantes, Hawthorne, Poe, the very kith
Of Muses—anything but Meredith.

By midnight oil in Hotel Richardson
We read Arabian Nights, *et cetera*,
And Wilkie, wizard's ward and witch's son—
Of Smollet talked, and some that better are.
I Hugo have, and Balzac, Goethe, too,
To read. (Boccaccio is too dirty to.)
Your A. K. G. is cheap and bad— you see
I am a literary Sadducee.

I read historical theology,
The second volume of Hurst's History.
He's dead—Salaam, and my apology,
But where he's gone, to me's a mystery.
Not Hell, for he is, if he's in it there,
Too dry to last a half a minute there.
But that is wicked—I retract it all,
A bishop should not be attacked at all.

Bubbles

The invitation's out, respond to it.

Whatever books you think I'm lacking in,
Inside your grip (tho shirts are pawned) to wit,

Those very same you will be packing in.
But poetry, if one should want it, he
Would find upon my shelves a quantity.
(That rhyme is Gilbert's. Never mind.)

Adieu, it
Is time to quit.

Sincerely ever,

HEWITT.

Plainfield, Vermont, November 13, 1911.

Bubbles

EPISTLE TO MRS. NELLIE E. MORSE.

*(Before Christmas, 1911, on the wrapper of
Miss Thaxter's book, Among the Isles of
Shoals.)*

Please look at this letter,
My mother-in-law,
Then burn it you'd better,
Or clutch in your claw
And rip it ere over
It others may look.
(It's only the cover
And won't hurt the book.)
My rhymes are factitious,
My theme is pernicious,
Intention suspicious,
And meter as if
The Muses would wish us
All carcasses stiff.
For devoid of all matter
None ever have sinned

Bubbles

With such meaningless clatter
But Swinburne and wind.
My excuse is that Christmas
Is near and the Isthmus
Of Panama I
Could as readily buy
As a present, so this muss
Is all you will get
Out of me you can bet.

Enclosed in this winder
Please find a reminder
To bind a stray thought
To the days that were kinder
Than these we have got.
Oh the summery breeze on
The undulant ocean!
To do as we please on
The veriest notion!
Where lovers may squeeze on
The sands they would freeze on
To day by the ocean!

Bubbles

For Winter (Oh felony!)

Coming to mock us,
Is howling like Hell in a
Socialist caucus!

O little green cottage
Beside the Atlantic,
To live upon pottage
And pleasures romantic
In thee, it would make us
A merrier band!

Oh, I want to see acres
Of ivory sand,
And to hear the long breakers
That plunge on the strand,
Far apart from the people,
The stewards, the Ladies'
Aid, graveyard, and steeple,
And socials—oh Hades!

Of lucious red lobster,
As hot as the south,
I would feel a great gob stir
Around in my mouth.

Bubbles

With Ethel and Leon
And Nina and thee,
I wish I could be on
The summery sea!

Now Leon would frolic,
Then snooze and sleep sounder
Than Rip Van, then rollick,
Fish, row, and eat flounder,
Then double with colic
In agony grim—
This picture is him.

And Ethel (though properly
Clad for her bath)
Cold water would stop early,
Leastwise it hath;
For light heels to the cloud
Did she fling, and run bold
Far ahead of the crowd—
“Boo! The water is COLD!”
And, afraid it would freeze her,
Petite and short kilted,

Bubbles

She could say with old Caesar,
 "I came, saw, and *wilted!*"
Then home did she scamper,
 Foot fleet as the doe's,
Too timid to damp her
 Ten tiny t—toes.
And now I aver
This picture is her.

To courting addicted,
 To kisses not loath—
This I have depicted,
 Oh this is 'em both.

Now since I, who am writing,
 Am writing to you,
I am not inditing
 Concerning us two;
Nor of N. (With a thistle
 Don't tickle your love.)
And she this epistle
 Must see and approve.

Bubbles

And since there's a curse in all
Jokes that are personal,
Mater, Good day!
And don't think me worse, in all
Conscience I pray,
But pardon this bothering,
Bad as you rue it.
Adieu to you, mother-in-
Law. Arthur Hewitt.

November 13, 1911.

Bubbles

CURSORY REMARKS OF AN AMATEUR THEOLOGIAN.

When Coleridge, studying divinity
From Bull and Waterland on Deity,
Thus classified the Holy Trinity:
“Alter—Community—Iipseity,”
And “Thesis, Synthesis, Antithesis,”
He made a misty mess, no myth is this.
Such writers my *sanctorum sanctum* all
Have filled. I wish I could have spanked 'em
all.

A theologian in chrysalis,
My reading rather lacks humidity;
A fleshly thorn I think the thistle is
To spur my spirit from stupidity.
If one enjoys his job, oh then it is
As good as sitting in the senate is,
But sitting at my desk a mess I missed
Of better fun and I'm a pessimist.

Bubbles

I am not writing for an editor
And fatal fluency shall bubble some.
I know not if I should have said it or
Kept silence, and I may be troublesome,
But I am going to let my rage arise
In rhymes Byronic (not to plagiarize)
Against these dry old tomes that weigh a ton.
I'll blaze like flaming, falling Phaeton.

If I were ever an *episcopos*
(A strange episcopossibility—
The church electing me would risk a pos-
Sibility of imbecility)
I would in every town and city call
All circles, sacred or political,
To find those fools, the fat and bonier,
Whom I'd appoint to Patagonia.

My last perusals make me wearier
Than any plodding tramp with tattered
toes.
I read "has altered the criteria
Of factuality." Of what? God knows,

Bubbles

The dictionary doesn't. Sufficient is
Omniscience, and the Lord omniscient is.
In proof whereof: He understands a pile
Of things His wise ones write. Wouldst
learn the style?

Each simple Saxon word then Latinize,
And puff a paragraph into a page,
Write D.D., Ph.D.; fling *that* in eyes
That view the very sight of it with rage—
I'd rather read redundant rhetoric
That flames as if a lad had set a rick
Of hay afire! You'd be an ass to call
These dry old writers less bombastical.

They think to write; God, when He made
them, thought
They never should. They do. 'Tis
laughable
As when the stall my farmer father sought
And found the hoped-for heifer calf a bull.
'Twas milk, not hay, that little bossy ate,
And these such fodder dry should nauseate.

Bubbles

Is knocking such upon the head a sin?
I'd like to cure them with such medicine.

I hope this talk is not inveterate.

The pabulum with which they foster us,
We ought to swallow it or better it,

And mulish kicking is preposterous.

O mea culpa! I'll be diligent

In study, though 'tis like to kill a gent
Like *me*—though every seven men or eight
In ten this kind of thing should venerate.

And will you tell me how in sin I can

Remember all the monks I overhaul,
The Benedictine and Dominican,

Franciscan, Augustinian, and all:
Cistercian, Jesuit, the whole of them,
And Vallambrosa's valley full of them?
Why popes infallible will fix a text
Infallibly corrected by the next?

I wish succession apostolical

Objections had that were removable,

Bubbles

But folly all and fol-de-rol I call

Insistence on a thing unprovable.

Ordained by Wesley, better 'tis to break

Succession than the sacred orders take

From mediocrity. Red tape I see

In Anglican and pompous papacy.

The stately drama of the Vatican—

My faith in this is hardly quite implicit.

I think it not an honor that I can

Inspect a toe pontifical and kiss it.

This osculation if invited to,

I could not say, "Thanks, pope! Delighted to!"

And being a loveless, tempted celibate

Is squeezing on the hooks of Hell a bait.

I surely think it is legitimate

To marry ministers *ad libitum*.

If such as they (poor things!) can get a mate

It's mighty meanness to prohibit 'em.

The heart must be volcanic in upheaval

To live in loneliness so medieval.

It is as if one had with Dante room

Received in Satan's sorry anteroom.

Bubbles

And true if transubstantiation is,
In sacrament, the taking of our Lord
A gustatory demonstration is,
To chew the Deity with teeth abhorred.
Oh, surely we are wiser, better for
Regarding "*Hoc est corpus*" metaphor,
Though we can never hope to fit you all
With any earthly kind of ritual.

But think not I lambast a Catholic
With vengeful joy with which a naughty brat
Who strings a wire across my path I lick,
I have no malice in me such as that.
Our Mother Church she is—anathema
Be he who hateth when he hath a ma!
But mother's daughter, she absconded hath
Because the mother wouldn't take a bath,

And now the daughter's dirty. The didactics
Of Mother Church meet her disapprobation:
Idolatry, confession, priestly tactics,
Plus purgatory, supererogation,
Et cetera, and if *et cetera*

Bubbles

Is weak, then fashion words that better are;
But I can tell you he has got a stunt
Who tells the evils of the Protestant.

I shall not try. I think not this a pate
To hold conclusions hermeneutical
Anent all failings and anticipate,
In naming measures therapeutic, all
The downy doctors of divinity.
Then naming faults, if one begin it, he
Quits not. Still, naming just the usual
Abuses, I shall not abuse you all.

And one is this: While people say (and sigh)
"Oh truly I with Christ co-operate!"
Home comforts at the dollar rate they buy—
Redemption at the dime and copper rate.
"I'm free," they say, "from Hebrew limita-
tion!"
Then give to gospelize all God's creation
(In thank for more than Hebrew blessings,
too)
A tenth of what would shame a stingy Jew.

Bubbles

Their testimony may be passionate,

Their prayer is very eloquent, I know,
But you cannot collect the cash on it—

It's tithe that makes the missionary go.
And tithe will tickle, too, the treasurer
Who serves the local church, and pleasure her.
'Tis God's command, so don't obliterate
The tithe until you pay a fitter rate.

But many duties are, up here amid
The mountains, shirked as much as is the
tithe.

I wish that under Cheops' pyramid
All lackadaisicality could writhe.
Folks think whatever happens (hazily)
Hap-hazardly they labor, lazily.
Of all a church's wicked ways I call
The wickedest the lackadaisical.

And rather than to see the Deity
In church or vestibule or corridor,
Some folk, I think, would rather see a tea,
Or supper, sale or something horrid.

Bubbles

Like lotus eaters in the Odyssey,
There many a mortal fills his pod, I see;
Then for his dollar dinner pays his dime
And thinks he's served his God another time.

The glorious Gospel has no substitute
In silly simpering society.
For lodges, lectures, aids, and clubs to toot
The horn is good, but 'tis not piety.
It gives religion the pneumonia
(Which makes a body badly bonier)
To splash attention round and spatter it
As far abroad as we can scatter it.

But I am not the individual
To settle this, and so pell mell I go
To cast my cares (Good-bye I bid you all!)
Beyond the Arctic Archipelago.
And since my tastes are cosmopolitan,
I'm going to read a while in Smollett, an
Unsanctimonious ass, and when he's read,
I tardily will tumble into bed.

November, 1911.

Bubbles

A POSTERIOR, BUT PREFATORY
EPISTLE
UNTO
ONE'S SCHOOLMATE AND BROTHER-
IN-LAW, THE DEDICATEE.

Dear Leon, do you know the reeve in Chaucer?

This preface is quite different, no doubt,
From any preface which you ever saw, sir;
Like him, it rides the "hyndreste of the
route."

You may not like the book I dedicate;
Sponte sua it came to medicate
My sorrows! It may lack in snappiness—
It bubbled out in utter happiness.

Like mountain springs that flow spontaneous
Just when I get as sober as a judge
The merrymakers miscellaneous
Within me wake and holler out, "O Fudge!"
They put their shirt and shoes and breeches on,

Bubbles

And me they try their overreaches on.
It's always foolish, often eerie. Us
Deliver, Lord! We should be serious!

On wisdom's highest temple pinnacle,
They tempt me, saying, "Cast your carcass
down!"

I answer, "Thanks! I won't! I'm finical!"
They push. I tumble to the loam so brown.
Though mother, when we were cantankerous,
Spanked (with a paddle for a spanker) us,
I cannot do a thing, I bet you all
My books, against their pranks perpetual.

The saints will turn me from the synagogue,
For writing rhymes that are so frivolous;
The governor will set a din agog,
And say "Such drivels don't you drivels us!
I'll move you out of office for malfeasance
'Or other cause inimical.' Take these hence!"
Then I will go again to legislature
And with a bill abolish human nature.

Bubbles

O let them rip; I read the rhymes of Byron
Before I ever was a minister,
And Robbie Burns my spirit did environ
Before my wrangling set a din astir
Beneath the golden dome, on education,
Or Christmas trees, or booze, or the relation
Of ballot boxes to the petticoat—
(To rhyme with that I'll need to get a coat,
Or goat perhaps.) My legislative draughts-
men,
Some ninny says he thinks they may abolish,
But if they kill the skill that guides the
craftsmen
The craft itself can hardly have a polish.
But let them rip! If ever I am forty,
I may not feel so limber and so snorty,
But I have done my best and bide the chances.
Come, let us read the Waverley Romances!

The Old Brick Manse is my baronial
Tantallon. I am pastor still *in loco*
Where church and steeple are colonial,
And eloquence and windows are rococo.

Bubbles

The room is cream and green and beautiful,
The congregation patient, dutiful.
To rural bliss I settle in my station—
Snap! Something calls the Board of Educa-
tion.

A squirt-ball, halo, and anthology
I eat for breakfast (when I have the cash)
I mean (I make you my apology)
An orange, doughnut, and a dish of hash;
Then roll around the state with Hillegas
(Compared with whom I seem a silly Gus),
I like the educator's company,
I wonder if it leavens my lump any?

Episcopal and Congregational
And Methodist and Presbyterian
Denominations are irrational
Enough to say, "O come and weary an
Assembly in our theological
Departments," so I give a stodge I call
My lectures. Leon, can you question "Is he
A lazy man or is he mighty busy?"

Bubbles

I'm both. From Maine to Pennsylvania

(This language is not metaphorical)

I've gone in sunny days and rainier,

Peripatetic, oratorical.

Last fall they said, "O lay aside a hoe

In Plainfield gardens. Come to Idaho,

And in the Rocky Mountains and in Texas

Come, lecture to our college if it wrecks us."

It didn't do the latter, for I couldn't

Find time to do the former, so it goes.

I'm writing you of matter that I shouldn't;

But ever we have known each other's woes.

Save talking to the teachers of Aroostook,

('Twas shortly after I of Christmas goose took)

And rolling o'er the plains to Colorado,

This winter's spent in old Spruce Mountain's
shadow.

Oh, dust may cave and cover all my fountains,

"My days are swifter than a weaver's
shuttle,"

But still I hope my "Songs of the Green
Mountains"

Bubbles

Will soon be published by the house of
Tuttle.

I love them—mostly writ in auld lang syne,
However they are faulty they are mine.
And one can never quite forget the glory
Of gloamings that have vanished into story.

O Leon, you alone will read this letter,
Therefore I say I love you, little loth.
(I love perhaps your wife a little better
But then, who wouldn't, if they knew you
both?)

The brown-eyed little kiddie of a sister,
If she were here tonight I might have kissed
her.)

O snow-white marble fireplace in Dover,
And nights that make us want to live them
over!

Or better yet, while whippoorwills were calling
In woodland valleys far away from sight,
Till hemlock knots were blazing in the falling
Old arch of stones you built on Thetford
height,

Bubbles

We watched the lone old hilltop pine gigantic,
And silver fog beneath the moon romantic—
But that is sentiment! I tread the bum edge
Of being "lone and lorn" like Mrs. Gummidge.

Upon his only visit to a city

'Tis said a rustic puckered up his breath,
Blew out the gas, (the latter was a pity)

Then went to bed and smelled himself to
death.

His clay was taken by the undertaker,
His soul fled, fumigated, to its Maker;
A categorical imperative
Compelled him to complete his narrative.

I, too, were smothered by lugubrious

Stern Duty, spite of all her pedigree,
(See Wordsworth) but for the salubrious

Old bubbles such as I have said agree
With me. I should be sunk in sod a numb
One, dead as any drugged by laudanum—
I'd have to gallop after the Hereafter
If 'twere not for a world of song and laughter.

Bubbles

When someone made in class an asinine
Reply, you know how it would tickle us
More than the ball game (ours alas! a nine
Which lost) if *we* were not ridiculous.
But now mine enemy's own enemy
Hath writ a book inviting venom, he
Will fly to you when all the boobies giggle
Contemptuous, encamp, and never wiggle.

But similar unto that gaseous
Man, I must terminate, and wipe my pen.
The Lord preserve you and the lassie; us
And all who love us evermore. Amen.
(And likewise those who don't.) May you be
rich in
The bounties of the Lord and of the kitchen.
Like Mary, if you think, or swink like Martha,
Be blest in either.

Yours for ever,
Arthur.

November, 1919.

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